

# **Suggestions for CAC-Community Meeting Organizers and Participants**

(last updated 3/1/2023)

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## About this Document

The mission of the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is to protect human health and the environment by regulating pesticide sales and use, and by fostering reduced-risk pest management. DPR works collaboratively with County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs) to advance this mission in local jurisdictions throughout the state by enforcing pesticide use regulations. Effective and meaningful engagement with communities is critical to DPR and CACs to enforce pesticide use regulations and to enhance public and worker awareness of where to get pesticide use information, how to file pesticide use complaints, and how to participate in the pesticide regulatory process.

This document is intended to be a resource for communities and CAC staff as one of a variety of tools (see DPR's [Resource Hub for Local Engagement](#), also referred to as "**Resource Hub**") produced by a collaborative, diverse group of both community and CAC partners to improve and enhance communication and engagement across the state. The following suggestions for CAC-community engagement were developed to support ongoing efforts of CAC offices and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to provide accurate and transparent information and promote engagement between community members and CAC staff.

Some of this content, including the sample resources, was adapted from the State Water Resources Control Board's **Community Accountability and Engagement Plan** for Administrators, with their permission.

### 1. Overview of CAC Roles

The mission of County Agricultural Commissioners (CACs) and their staff is to promote and protect agriculture – including both growers and farmworkers – and protect people and the environment. CACs work closely with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) to enforce agricultural state laws and regulations at the local level. Each County Agricultural Commissioner is licensed by CDFA and appointed by their respective county's Board of Supervisors.

CAC offices are responsible for a wide range of duties that vary per county, including:

- **Achieving compliance with pesticide use requirements and preventing pesticide hazards** through education and enforcement
- **Evaluating proposals to use certain pesticides**, ensuring that proper precautions are taken to protect people and the environment
- **Investigating all reported pesticide-related illnesses and injuries** in their county
- **Inspecting sites** for proper pesticide use and fieldworker pesticide-related safety conditions
- **Enforcing laws** related to pest detection, eradication, exclusion, and quality standards for fruits and vegetables
- **Ensuring marketplace equity** by enforcing weights and measures laws and regulations
- **Checking supermarket scales and gasoline pumps** for accuracy [as County Sealers]
- **Sampling imported produce** for exotic pests
- **Inspecting** nurseries, seed producers, and beehives
- **Enforcing** the state's organic food laws

To find out more about your CAC and their contact information, please visit the California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association web page [cacasa.org/county/](http://cacasa.org/county/).

## 2. Meeting Suggestions

CACs and community groups may use many different meeting styles and interactions for engagement depending on various considerations (such as content and purpose). Types of interactions could include:



- Small group meetings



- CAC office hours



- Community/organization-led meetings



- CAC-led public meetings



- Local events



- Local radio/TV interviews

General suggestions are presented first, followed by specific suggestions organized by these interaction formats. Tools that are available on DPR's [Resource Hub](#) are identified by ***bold and italicized*** text in purple.

### 2.1 General Suggestions

#### Organizing a meeting

##### **Lay the groundwork**

Community leaders and CACs should work together to:

- (1) Respond promptly to requests for meetings, as this is foundational for trust building and promoting transparency.
- (2) Identify a time and place (or online platform) to meet. Consider a time of day that is convenient for participants (e.g., evening, after work hours), as well as locations that promote accessibility. For example,
  - Is the CAC office served by public transit?
  - Is the CBO office located in a community where participants live?
  - Can Zoom offer closed captioning or interpretation to address barriers to participation?
- (3) Identify agenda items to discuss well in advance of the meeting. Develop the agenda in a collaborative manner.
- (4) Identify which staff members will be most effective for the intended discussion topics.

Review the [Participation Ground Rules](#) in advance.

##### **Get to know your audience**

The [Community Interest Survey](#) (see Sample Resources) can be adapted and used to assess your community's preferred methods of communication and engagement. This can be administered well in advance of public meetings as well as handed out at events to continually collect engagement preferences from your community.

Community leaders and CACs should work together to:

- (1) Get a sense of how many people will be there and plan for a space that accommodates the number of attendees.

- (2) Identify potential barriers to full participation, such as preferred language(s) apart from English.
- Interpretation: Consider partnering with local interpreters or including on-staff interpreters for simultaneous interpretation or separate sessions by language. Be sure to ask about language variants, if applicable. See DPR's [Resource Hub](#) for interpretation resources, including lists of interpreters by county.
  - Translation: Assess whether key written materials would be helpful to have translated into requested languages.

### **Gather materials**

Community leaders and CACs should work together to identify which materials (e.g., bilingual business cards with website links) or handouts would be helpful to have printed for the audience (and their networks). For example, some materials on DPR's [Resource Hub](#) include a handout in English and Spanish about how to report pesticide incidents ([www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/pressrls/emergency\\_cards.pdf](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/pressrls/emergency_cards.pdf)) and a handout in English and Spanish about who to contact if one has a pesticide concern or illness ([https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/pesticide\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/pesticide_factsheet.pdf)).

### During a meeting

#### **Actively listen**

- Demonstrate active listening skills. Be cognizant of body language, such as making eye contact\* and sitting or standing upright. Avoid folding your arms across your chest, slouching, or looking away at your notes or phone when others are speaking.
- Make sure you are positioned in a way where you can be seen and heard. If participating via Zoom, have your video on, if possible, and use the Gallery setting so that all participants can see each other or the Pin function to highlight speaker(s).

#### **Share relevant information**

- Provide relevant written materials in easy-to-understand non-technical language that contains graphics and visuals to facilitate understanding. Minimize the use of technical language. For resources about using plain language, visit [plainlanguage.gov/resources/](http://plainlanguage.gov/resources/).
- Acknowledge when you don't have an answer immediately and offer any items that you can follow up on (e.g., contact people for local government groups that can help address the questions raised outside of CAC responsibilities, how to report pesticide incidents, coordinating next meeting time).

### After a meeting

#### **Follow up**

- Provide resources and answers to any questions raised (e.g., providing contact information for other local government groups, following up on pesticide incident questions).
  - Do so in a timely fashion, within two weeks if possible, to demonstrate that you value the questions and input.
- Share contact information for a designated CAC/CBO staff members who can communicate with the public in appropriate languages.

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\* Note that eye contact is not always considered respectful behavior in certain indigenous communities.


## 2.2 Specific suggestions for different meeting formats

### SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

#### After a meeting

##### **Follow up**

Provide a summary of topics discussed with participants. Do so in a timely fashion, within 2 weeks if possible, to demonstrate that you value the questions and input.


	<b>Example Settings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmworker group asks CAC about pesticide enforcement</li> <li>• Residents ask CAC about pesticide concerns</li> <li>• Home-owner group asks if the CAC office can help them with a local issue</li> </ul>

### CAC OFFICE HOURS

#### Organizing a meeting

##### **Lay the groundwork**

- Consider referring to the *Community Interest Survey* (see Sample Resources) responses to assess the community's preferred methods of communication and engagement.
- Advertise office hours to interested community members prominently and utilize media channels that stakeholders use (e.g., posting on the CAC website, community organization websites, and on Facebook/other social media; posting flyers at community resource centers, food pantries, or the post office; and calling residents).
- Consider sharing information through trusted messengers—both individuals and organizations. This may include individuals and community and advocacy groups that are already in dialogue with the CAC office, as well as community-based organizations such as faith-based groups and health and social service organizations.

	<b>Example Settings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community member brings up a specific pesticide concern</li> <li>• Resident asks how the CAC office can help them with ag-urban concerns</li> </ul>

#### During a meeting

##### **Share relevant information**

Share contact information for a designated CAC staff who can communicate with the public in appropriate languages.

## COMMUNITY/ORGANIZATION-LED MEETINGS


### Organizing a meeting

#### **Lay the groundwork**

Consider referring to the *Community Interest Survey* (see Sample Resources) responses to assess the community's preferred methods of engagement.

#### **Get to know your audience**

Work with community leaders and CACs to get a sense of any specific interest in CAC responsibilities. Consider talking points that can help clearly organize and communicate information about topics of interest.

	<b>Example Settings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local organizer invites CAC to share their role at a quarterly meeting</li> <li>• CAC staff attend community event and network with local organizations, offering to speak at their next meeting</li> </ul>

### During a meeting

#### **Share relevant information**


Share contact information for a designated CAC staff who can communicate with the public in languages of interest.

## CAC-LED PUBLIC MEETINGS

### Organizing a meeting

#### **Lay the groundwork**

- Consider referring to the *Community Interest Survey* (see Sample Resources) responses to assess the community's preferred methods of engagement.
- Advertise the meeting to interested community members (e.g., posting on the CAC website, community organization websites, and on Facebook/other social media; posting flyers at community resource centers, food pantries, or the post office; and calling residents).
- Consider adapting the *Public Meeting Notice* and *Public Meeting Agenda* templates (see Sample Resources).

	<b>Example Settings</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAC holds public meeting to discuss new projects and initiatives in the area</li> <li>• CAC and partners hold public meeting to discuss ag-urban interface and role of CACs</li> <li>• CAC and community partners hold public meeting to discuss how to obtain pesticide information and report pesticide exposure incidents.</li> </ul>

### During a meeting

#### **Actively listen**

Allow communities an opportunity to share comments, concerns, and their experiences.

#### **Share relevant information**

- Share contact information for a designated CAC staff who can communicate with the public in languages of interest.
- Share instances when you have acted on community feedback from previous public meetings.

After a meeting

**Follow up**

Consider posting a summary of topics discussed on your organization’s website and sharing with groups involved.

LOCAL EVENTS


Organizing a meeting

**Lay the groundwork**

Collaborate with community leaders and CACs to identify local community and inter-organizational government events that would be beneficial for CAC and community-based organization staff to attend.

**Get to know your audience**

Work with community leaders and CACs to get a sense of any specific interests in CAC/CBO roles.

	Example Settings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAC and CBO staff attend farmers market event or community food drive</li> <li>• CAC attends regional meetings for local government groups involved in agricultural enforcement</li> </ul>

During a meeting

**Actively participate**

Be proactive about talking with event attendees and organization leaders. Offer to speak at a local organization’s next meeting to share your organization’s role.

**Share relevant information**

Share contact information for a designated CAC/CBO staff who can communicate with the public in languages of interest. Bring handouts, flyers, business cards, and/or brochures for easy information sharing.

LOCAL RADIO/TV INTERVIEWS

Organizing a meeting

**Lay the groundwork**


Collaborate with community leaders and CACs to:

- (1) Identify which radio/TV station would be most impactful and when to have the interview segment air.
- (2) Determine which topics to share and how much time is allocated for CAC staff.

**Get to know your audience**

Work with community leaders and CACs to:

- (1) Get a sense of who the radio/TV audience is, and any specific interest in CAC responsibilities. Consider talking points that can help clearly

	Example Settings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CAC staff partner with Spanish radio station to invite community to upcoming public event/meeting</li> <li>• CAC staff share a quick overview of their role (e.g., pesticide use concerns, pesticide exposure incidents)</li> </ul>

organize and communicate information about these topics.

(2) Identify which language (and staff member) will be most effective for the audience.

**Gather materials**

Identify which phone numbers and webpages for key materials would be helpful to share with the audience (and their networks).

During a meeting

**Share relevant information**

Share contact information for a designated CAC staff who can communicate with the public in languages of interest.

After a meeting

**Follow up**

Consider sharing a link to the interview on social media and/or web pages if a link is available.



### 3. Sample Resources

The following templates could be useful when planning for CAC-community meetings:

- **Community Interest Survey:** ask community members about their experience with previous CAC meetings and events and what engagement formats and communication methods they prefer for engaging with the CAC office, including preferred languages.

This can be adapted and administered well in advance of public meetings as well as handed out at events to continually collect engagement preferences from your community.

- **Public Meeting Notice:** announce an upcoming CAC-led public meeting.
- **Public Meeting Agenda:** list potential topics to cover at a CAC-led public meeting.

In the following templates, we use **green text** to indicate where county- and event-specific details can be incorporated. **Purple text** indicates the title of the template resource and should be deleted before the resource is printed. To adapt these templates, please download the Microsoft Word version of these **Sample Resources** on the [Resource Hub for Local Engagement](#).

**Community Interest Survey Template**

**[COUNTY NAME] County Agricultural Commissioner Office  
Community Interest Survey**

**Help our County Agricultural Commissioner Office get to know our community!  
They are the first point of contact for local pesticide use questions and concerns, and they can use these responses to better understand our community's communication and engagement preferences.**

*Please Print Clearly*

Full Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

**1) Have you participated in any public meetings regarding County Agricultural Commissioner Office issues (for example, pesticides, weights & measures)?**

Yes  No If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**2) What language(s) are spoken by you or in your community?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Would you attend an in-person meeting related to the County Agricultural Commissioner Office?**

Yes  No If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

**4) Would you participate in a virtual, online meeting, like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or on the phone?**

Yes  No If yes, do you prefer Zoom, Teams, or phone? (circle)

**5) What is the best day of the week and time to hold a public meeting?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**6) What is the best way to provide you with information regarding the County Agricultural Commissioner Office? Please rate the following tools on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = least preferred and 5 = most preferred):**

Small group meetings/discussions	1	2	3	4	5
Mailed fact sheets	1	2	3	4	5
Website/internet	1	2	3	4	5
Information through schools	1	2	3	4	5
Information through churches	1	2	3	4	5
Public notices in a newspaper	1	2	3	4	5
Workshops (open houses)	1	2	3	4	5
Community/public meetings	1	2	3	4	5
E-mailed information	1	2	3	4	5
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)	1	2	3	4	5
Information posted in public areas	1	2	3	4	5
Press releases/newspaper articles	1	2	3	4	5

**7) Are there other ways for us to keep you better informed?** (circle) Yes No

**Please describe.**

**Public Meeting Notice Template**

**Join us!**

**[COUNTY NAME] COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER  
PUBLIC MEETING**

The **County Agricultural Commissioner** (CAC) is a person appointed and funded by the County Board of Supervisors that promotes and protects our local public health, environment, and agriculture and is locally responsible for enforcing pesticide use rules in agriculture and other settings.

**In plain language, write a 1-2 sentence description about the purpose of this meeting. For example, “Learn more about your CAC, their role, and upcoming plans to protect public health and the environment.”**

We will also cover:

- **[SPECIFIC TOPICS FOR THIS PUBLIC MEETING]**
- **[Example – Local project timeline and updates]**

**Date/Time: [DATE AND TIME]**

**Location: [ADDRESS]**

**For more information, contact:  
CAC STAFF POINT OF CONTACT  
PHONE, EMAIL,  
MAILING ADDRESS**

**Public Meeting Agenda Template**

**PUBLIC MEETING # [Insert Meeting Number]**  
**[County Name] County Agricultural Commissioner Office**  
**DAY OF THE WEEK, MONTH, DAY, 2023 from 00:00 PM – 00:00PM**  
**[Meeting Venue Name and Room, Meeting Venue Address]**  
**or [Zoom Link and/or Conference Line]**

**MEETING PURPOSE**

**In plain language, write a 1-2 sentence description about the purpose of this meeting. For example, “Today we will cover how to reach out to the CAC office and report any pesticide concerns.”**

**AGENDA**

- I. Introductions and Overview of Meeting Format
- II. Public Meeting Topics:
  - Role of the CAC
  - How to effectively report a pesticide incident complaint in a timely manner
  - Update on major projects or plans
  - Update on any changes to CAC-related laws or regulations
  - Public comments, questions and answers
- III. Next Public Meeting Date and Time [If scheduled]
- IV. Adjourn